

## Honda Wins Congressional Gold Mouse Award, Third Successive Web Site Honors

Written by Mike Honda

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"I am honored to be the only Member of the House of Representatives to be chosen for a website award from the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) each time it has been awarded," said Rep. Honda. "Our most recent Golden Mouse award, the top honor, renews my commitment to providing easily accessible resources for my constituents and further underscores my commitment to substantively interact with and serve the people I am honored to represent. As a Member representing Silicon Valley – the world's technological capital - I make my website one of my top priorities. My entire staff contributes to provide constituents timely information on my legislative efforts, constituent services, as well as a list of district non-profit and Government resources. Because my district is so diverse, we provide information in several languages, including a Spanish newsletter. As the constituents of California's 15th Congressional District continue to lead America with their high tech innovations, I will continue working to reflect that innovative spirit in my work in Congress."

The Gold Mouse Report and Awards are part of the Congressional Management Foundation's broader research project, "Connecting to Congress," funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. For this project CMF partnered with researchers from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, University of California-Riverside and Ohio State University to study how Members of Congress can use the Internet to improve communications with their constituents and to promote greater participation in the legislative process.

"One of the key purposes of the awards is to highlight best practices so offices can improve their sites by learning from those doing a good job," said Beverly Bell, executive director of the Congressional Management Foundation. "Web sites that garnered an Award in 2006 illustrate the best practices that we hope can serve as examples for others to follow."

Congressman Honda's Web site shows that he has identified the needs of his various constituencies and has developed easily accessible content that meets their needs online," said Bell. Rep. Honda is to be congratulated for being among the best of the best Web sites on Capitol Hill, and the Congressional Management Foundation is pleased to present him with the 2006 Gold Mouse Award."

"The 2006 report shows that Web sites are an increasingly critical channel through which Members communicate to, and hear from, constituents. In a time when people can do everything online from renewing their driver licenses to paying their taxes, they understandably expect to find information on the Web about legislation and congressional assistance with federal agencies, as well as the opportunity to communicate their own views," Bell said.

Web sites were graded on how well they incorporate five basic building blocks that extensive research has identified as critical for effectiveness: audience, content, usability, interactivity, and innovation. Using these building blocks, an evaluation framework was developed by CMF and their research partners at Harvard, Ohio State, and the University of California-Riverside that would be fair and objective, while still taking into account important qualitative factors that affect a visitor's experience on a Web site.

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CMF will be assessing congressional Web sites again in 2007. All House and Senate Member, committee and leadership Web sites will be evaluated during the summer of 2007 and another report is expected to be released by the end of the year.

A full copy of the report, the 2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill, is available on the web site of the Congressional Management Foundation.